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**United States Attorney Benjamin B. Wagner
Eastern District of California**

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CONTACT: Lauren Horwood
PHONE: 916-554-2706
usacae.edcapress@usdoj.gov

POT HOUSE MORTGAGE FRAUDSTER ENTERS GUILTY PLEA

FRESNO, Calif. — United States Attorney Benjamin B. Wagner announced today that Monique Le Nguyen, aka Monique Dzung Le, 60, of Milpitas, a licensed real estate agent, pleaded guilty today before United States District Judge Lawrence J. O'Neill to conspiring to commit mail fraud in connection with the financing and acquisition of five residential properties in Fresno and Mendocino Counties that were later used for the indoor cultivation of large quantities of marijuana.

Nguyen admitted in her guilty plea that she assisted her co-defendants and loan applicants Andy Lieng, aka Xi Andy Lieng, Jr., aka Andy Xi Lieng, Jr., 42, of Fresno, Jenny Chi Ha, aka Phuong A. Ha, 43, of Fresno, Tony Lieng, aka Ung A. Lieng, 36, of Clovis, Lynn Truong, aka Linh Thi Truong, 38, of Clovis, and Shirley Wong, aka Ngoc Le Vuong, 42, of San Jose, to obtain property in Fresno, Clovis, and Willits, Calif. through the submission of fraudulent loan applications for 100 percent financing. The loans were processed by Nguyen at Confidential Investments, a mortgage brokering business in Milpitas, owned by Nguyen and her husband. As a result of the fraudulent loan submissions, the co-defendants were able to obtain \$2,109,550 to purchase five residential properties that were later used for the indoor cultivation of thousands of marijuana plants seized by law enforcement. Andy Lieng, his wife Ha, brother Tony Lieng, his wife Truong, and Wong are also charged with conspiracy to commit mail fraud and 12 counts of mail fraud in connection with mortgage fraud involving the properties purchased with Nguyen's assistance. Andy Lieng and Ha are also charged with conspiracy to cultivate marijuana, cultivation of marijuana, and maintaining homes for the purpose of cultivating marijuana indoors. Nguyen's co-defendants have all entered not guilty pleas and are scheduled for a jury trial in February 2011.

According to court documents, the investigation began as a result of a fire caused by the diversion of electricity at one of the houses on Villa Avenue in southeast Fresno that Nguyen helped Ha and Andy Lieng purchase. While Fresno firefighters were containing the fire, they discovered a sophisticated marijuana operation within the residence. The firefighters contacted the Fresno County Sheriff's Office and narcotics detectives found approximately 862 marijuana plants with an estimated street value of more than \$2 million. Detectives were then able to link the Villa property to another residence on Donner Avenue in Fresno, where they found an even bigger indoor growing operation consisting of more than 900 marijuana plants.

Nguyen was previously ordered detained as a flight risk and has been in the custody of the U.S. Marshals since her arrest in February by DEA agents at San Francisco International Airport. She is scheduled to be sentenced before U.S. District Judge Lawrence J. O'Neill on November 12, 2010. She faces a maximum possible sentence of 30 years in prison, a fine of up to \$1 million, and restitution to the lenders, which suffered actual losses of well over \$600,000.

as a result of post-sale foreclosures on the Fresno and Mendocino County properties.

This case is the product of an extensive investigation by the Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF). OCDETF is a focused interagency program investigating and prosecuting the most significant drug trafficking organizations throughout the United States by leveraging the combined expertise of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) led the investigation with assistance from the Fresno County Sheriff's Office, Clovis Police Department, Fresno Fire Department and Mendocino County Sheriff's Office. Primary support for the mortgage fraud portion of the investigation was provided by the U.S. Attorney's Office's Mortgage Fraud Task Force. Assistant United States Attorney Karen A. Escobar is prosecuting the case.

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